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January is

National Blood Donor Month

Blood is traditionally in short supply during the winter months due to the holidays, travel schedules, inclement weather and illness. January, in particular, is a difficult month for blood centers to collect blood donations.

You don't need a special reason to give blood. You just need your own reason.

Howard County awarded Blue and You Grant

The Howard County Health Improvement (HCHI) Coalition received a \$45,600 grant from the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas to reduce the amount of hospitalizations and death due to preventable injury. Several educational programs and media campaigns on a variety of topics will be implemented to help motivate residents to reduce risky behaviors.

The Safety Baby Shower program is coordinated through Howard Memorial Hospital, Arkansas Department of Health, and Cossatot Community College Allied Health Program. At least 40 pregnant women will be educated on safety topics such as safe sleep, drowning hazards and motor vehicle safety. Shower participants will complete a fire safety home plan and emergency call list to take with them. Smoke alarms and cabinet latches will be provided and each partici-

pant will learn about car seats and proper installation.

The Howard County Children's Center (HCCC) is taking a proactive approach to pregnancy and parenting education for their adult clients who suffer from mental and developmental disabilities. HCCC staff will implement the Real Care Baby program as hands-on education that promotes abstinence and/or family planning techniques for at least 30 clients.

The statewide ATV Safety Coalition has identified Howard County as one of eight counties statewide to pilot an ATV Safety Campaign. Methods of promotion include speaking engagements at local civic clubs, radio public service announcements, a comprehensive media campaign and distributing the ATV Safety Toolkit. The Coalition plans to identify teen leadership groups

within the county to be trained on the ATV Safety Toolkit so they can provide peer based direct education to other teens within the school setting. The Coalition is also working with the U of A Cooperative Extension Service to implement an ATV Safety Course Certification program locally, as well as to engage local ATV retailers to provide supplemental education at the dealership.



The HCHI Coalition will coordinate with local high school teen leadership groups to

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Insurance enrollment increases

Southwest Region In-Person Assistors (IPAs) have been busy! Although they have been assisting people since open enrollment began October 1, they conducted 57 regional presentations and/or enrollment events in December alone. They talked with 3,330 individuals about the Afford-

able Care Act between October and December 2013, and helped 953 people get enrolled in an insurance plan before January 1.

Open enrollment will continue through March 31, 2014. Those hoping to get coverage by February 1 need to enroll by January 15.

The SW Region has 31 IPAs who are trained and licensed to help residents get enrolled in quality health insurance plans offered through the Marketplace or the Medicaid Private Option. Every health unit has at least one IPA.

Clark County coalition celebrates 8 years

On Monday, December 16th, the Becoming a Healthy Clark County (BaHCC) Coalition hosted its 8th Annual Celebration at the United Pentecostal Church Fellowship Hall. The fellowship hall was eloquently decorated for the holiday season and 31 coalition members and guests enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by 3 Ladies Catering.

Kathy Loden, health unit administrator, welcomed BaHCC members and guests. Ron Wright, Director of Dawson Education Cooperative gave the prayer and blessing. Musi-

cal entertainment was provided by the Central Primary School Singing Bears. Joni McGaha, HHI Regional Manager, spoke to the coalition about the history and purpose of the Hometown Health

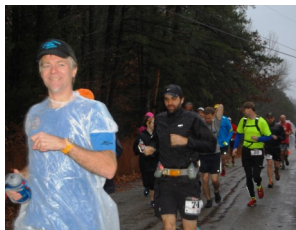
Initiative. BaHCC Chair Pam Hutchins spoke on Tobacco Prevention and Workplace Policies and Education. A PowerPoint presentation of pictures and activities of the coalition's achieve-

ments over the last few years was given by Kathy Loden. Members were excited to have the City of Arkadelphia Mayor Charles Hollingshead present, as well as parents of the primary students, public school staff, and a number of coalition members. Guests were invited to join the coalition and/or support coalition activities.



LOViT Marathon goes on in spite of weather

Mother Nature did her best to put a damper on the 2014 LOViT Marathon this year. The original date for the marathon was set for Saturday, December 7th but because of the big snow storm that came through the state in the middle of the week the event had to be rescheduled for December 21st. Knowing that the event was pushed to the weekend before Christmas and more rain and thunderstorms on the way, coor-



nators planned for a scaled down event from previous years.

Still, 30 enthusiastic runners showed up to run the 14 mile or 26.2 mile course in a torrential downpour with the creeks quickly rising. It was raining when they started the event and 8 hours later when the final runner finished the course it was still raining. The course is an AURA (Arkansas Ultra Runners Association) event so many of the dedicated runners

were there to help build points for their program.

Several Montgomery County Health Education Advisory Board (MCHEAB) members spent the day working the aide stations and trying to stay dry so they could provide support, food, and refreshments for the runners. The event could not go on without volunteers and MCHEAB is grateful to those who worked for hours in the horrible weather conditions to support the runners.

DASH hits 10 year mark

On Tuesday, December 10th, the Dallas County Health Alliance (DASH) hosted its 10th Annual Celebration at the Dallas County Medical Center. Twenty-four DASH members enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by the hospital cafeteria staff.

Tammy Gunter, Chair of DASH, welcomed members and Arnell Washington, RHS, gave the prayer and blessing. Members approved funding the remainder of the salary for the community garden worker and shared the dates of upcoming community activities.

Donna Ferguson, LHU Administrator, presented a PowerPoint of pictures and activities of the coalition's achievements over the past year. Donna was given a round of applause for her hard work for the coalition.

After a quick round of Bingo for door prizes, Donna and Tammy thanked everyone for their participation and asked them for their continued support DASH in the upcoming year.



Donna Ferguson highlights DASH activities for 2013.

Southern Obesity Summit

Over 400 leaders from across the south, including almost 50 youth, came together in Nashville, TN from November 17-19 to learn, share and engage around strategies that will impact the obesity crisis we are facing. The theme for this year's Southern Obesity Summit was Collaboration – playing off Henry Ford's quote "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." We have certainly followed and continue to follow that path.

Sixty different presenters in 20 breakout sessions shared their programs and processes for preventing obesity. Kim Hooks, Community Health Nurse Specialist (CHNS) and Community Health Promotion Specialist (CHPS) South Supervisor, was among the featured presenters. She delivered a presentation which highlighted the successes that can be duplicated on a regional

scale throughout the other southern states, in particular, the success of this unique group of ADH employees as a statewide cadre of educators and implementers in obesity prevention efforts via strategies that address nutrition, physical activity and high quality nurse continuing education offerings. A total of 7,425.9 CNE contact hours were awarded for school nurses from January through September 2013. These CNE packets were created by our CHNS and state school nurse consultant.

This model could be replicated to focus on obesity prevention on a multistate level with adequate funding and thoughtful program development. Having local buy-in and champions for health is essential in policy development that truly has an impact.

The CHNS and CHPS network is how Arkansas disseminates consistent op-

portunities and trainings across the state through local nurses who care about the counties they serve. Examples of successes include statewide implementation of components of Arkansas Act 1220 and the unique collaboration that exists with various partners with the goal of improving the health of students and communities.



Kim Hooks, CHNS & CHPS South Supervisor, at the poster session.

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implement the Drive Smart Challenge program this year. This is a student-led, six-week program designed to increase seat belt use and decrease cell phone use while driving. It is designed for multiple schools to participate which creates a healthy and motivational "challenge". Rewards will be given for Most improved seat belt use rate; Best overall seat belt use rate; Highest passenger seat belt use; Lowest driver cell phone use; and Most unique/creative scrapbook and activities.

Arkansas Children's Hospital Burn Outreach Unit is working directly with Roddy Smith, a trained fire safety

trainer for the state and HCHI coalition member, to develop a comprehensive Fire Safety Initiative. It will focus on general fire safety awareness, specifically the development of fire safety plans and providing smoke alarms and fire extinguishers for at least 100 residents.

Howard County leads the state in scald burns, therefore, Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) Burn Outreach Unit has been working with a HCHI Coalition member to develop and implement a pilot Fire Safety Program. The initiative will include a media campaign and direct education opportunities through local civic and church groups. A youth

focused piece will also be developed for implementation through the schools.

Howard County residents enjoy their "country living" which includes frequent use of farm equipment, ATV's, rivers/lakes, and hunting. The HCHI Coalition will host a Safety Day Summit which will be as fun as it is educational. This one-day event will teach children safety and health lessons that can keep them and those around them safe and healthy on a farm, at home, or participating in recreational activities. The program is designed to reach 8- to 13-year-olds. Students will rotate among interactive learning stations on bicycle, water, boat, gun, ATV, tractor, firework, and lawnmower safety.

Senior Center staff and guests get update on health issues

Chychy Smith, RHS, talked to 17 people in December at the Senior Citizens Center in Texarkana about flu facts, those most at risk, how flu spreads and prevention of the flu. Ruth Rhodes, In-Person Assistor (IPA), talked briefly about the Affordable Care Act and let the participants know that IPAs are

available to assist with enrollment and insurance questions at the local health unit.

A presentation was also given to employees on food safety and hand washing. Staff members were given basic information on safe handling of food such as storage, preparation, thawing,

cooking and refrigerating, as well as recommended temperatures for food storage. Hand washing was discussed as a key part of handling food safely. The presentation included when to wash hands, the right way to wash hands and alternative hand washing solutions via the use of hand sanitizers.



HHI Support Staff:

Joni McGaha, HHI Manager, Editor
Chychy Smith, Rural Health Specialist
Sarah Powell, Rural Health Specialist
Arnell Washington, Rural Health Specialist
Bonnie Carr, HHI Coordinator

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Helping hungry children

The Polk County Quality of Life (QOL) Coalition, in cooperation with the Mena Regional Health System, local businesses, and the Arkansas Rice Depot, has accepted the challenge to support a local Polk County School by providing food for the backpack program.

The backpack program sends home food in a backpack each Friday for those students who are in need. The backpack is stocked with "kid-friendly" ready-to-eat food.

The Arkansas Rice Depots "Hunger No More, Adopt a School" goal is to feed 40 children every weekend for an entire year. In order to reach that goal, 240 bricks must be purchased and the school house has to be fully bricked. The QOL members are participating by purchasing personalized bricks for \$10. The QOL recently made a \$600 donation to the Arkansas Rice Depot to help with this project.

If you are interested in helping with this project you may contact Brenda Huff at Brenda.huff@arkansas.gov

Arkansas Poverty Facts

- 18.8% of Arkansans live below the poverty line
- 1 in 6 Arkansans struggle to provide enough food for their family
- 27.6 of Arkansas children live in poverty
- Arkansas ranks 1st in the nation for food insecurity



Around the Region...

Healthy **Hot Spring County** Coalition celebrated their 8th anniversary on Monday, December 16th in Malvern. A light lunch was catered by Randi's City Café. Coalition members shared their successful projects from the previous year and discussed ideas for 2014 projects. The coalition wished their retiring members a "Happy Retirement" and thanked them for their years of volunteering and service with the coalition.

The **Southwest Region** Community Health Nurse Specialists (CHNS) and Community Health Promotion Specialist (CHPS) attended the Statewide CHNS/CHPS Meeting held in Little Rock on December 3rd. They heard from the Governmental Affairs Policy Director, Kathryn Hargis and received an update by Dr. Patricia Scott on Child and Adolescent Health. Ashley Anderson, from Midwest Dairy Council, spoke on Fuel Up to 60. Shelby Rowe, Intentional Injury Project Analyst, talked about the Period of Purple Crying and the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder dolls that the CHPS, CHNS, and

Regional HHI Managers received. Shelby is planning a training for the North and South CHPS, CHNS, and Regional Managers in January. Beverly Miller, ACH/UAMS Associate Director Injury Prevention Center, spoke on concussions and playground safety. Paula Smith, State School Nurse Consultant, gave the CHNS/CHPS updates.



The **Montgomery County** Health Education Advisory Board celebrated their 14th

year as a Hometown Health Coalition on Thursday, December 12th. A light lunch was catered by Little Italy. Bonnie Carr, SWR Hometown Health Coordinator went over the coalition's Year in Review and coalition members reflected on the many successes over the past year.

Tommie Rogers, CHNS, **Dawson Co -Op**, attended the Malvern School District Wellness Committee Meeting in Malvern on December 4th. There were approximately 15 present. A report was given from each school campus about what they are currently doing to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles. They are having much more participation in the lunch program since initiating their new lunch program. One of the student representatives spoke about some books that he got from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation called A Year of Being Well. It was thought these books could be handed out to parents at various upcoming future events.